



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sula Ranger District

7338 Hwy 93 S.
Sula, MT 59871
406-821-3201

RECEIVED

File Code: 1950

Date: February 2, 2007

FFR 05 7007

Ravalli County Commissioners

Dear Interested Party:

Hello, I am contacting you today to request your input on a proposed project on the Bitterroot National Forest. The Sula Ranger District is proposing the *Jennings Non-Commercial Thinning Project*. The project is designed to improve the health and vigor of young stands on approximately 670 acres in the Jennings Camp, Guide, Lyman, and Colvert Creek drainages (see attached map). The proposed treatment areas are predominately 20 - 30 year old ponderosa pine stands with lesser amounts of Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine. All the sites were harvested for timber production in the past (i.e. clearcut) and planted. Due to high tree densities and crowded conditions, these sites are experiencing high levels of competition and increasing in susceptibility to mountain pine beetle. The proposed treatment would enhance growth and vigor; reduce competition for sunlight, water, and nutrients; and modify stand conditions to lessen the risk of potential mountain pine beetle caused mortality and stand replacing fire in the future.

Small diameter (less than 8" diameter at breast height) non-commercial trees would be cut down to a stocking of approximately 150 - 200 trees per acre favoring the most vigorous, dominant and best-formed trees. All thinning work would be accomplished by hand using chainsaws. No heavy equipment, road building, or product removal is proposed. Slash will be treated by lopping and scattering tops and limbs, hand piling and burning, or underburning. Treatments are designed to favor ponderosa pine and reduce wildfire hazard over the long term by rendering stands more resilient to natural fire occurrence and ecosystem processes.

My preliminary determination is that this proposal falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and there are no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the category. (FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.2(6) — Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service level D, FSH 7709.56).

If you wish to comment, please see the attached page titled, 'Important Information for People Wishing to Comment on this Project' for directions and requirements.

Sincerely,

TRACY M. HOLLINGSHEAD
Sula District Ranger

Enclosure



Important Information for People Wishing to Comment on this Project

Public comments are invited on this project. Tracy Hollingshead, the Sula District Ranger, is the Responsible Official for this project.

This project is subject to the 2003, comment, and appeal regulations at 36 CFR 215.

Only those who provide comments or other expression of interest during this comment period will be accepted as appellants.

To be timely, comments for this proposed project must be postmarked or received within 30 days after the legal notice is published in the Ravalli Republic newspaper.

Comments can be written, faxed, hand delivered, or electronic.

Written comments should be mailed to: District Ranger, Sula Ranger District, 7338 Highway 93 South, Sula, Montana 59871.

The Sula District FAX number is (406) 821-2340.

The Sula District telephone number is (406) 821-3201.

The Sula District office is open from 8 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday for those who want to submit hand-delivered comments.

Electronic comments may be sent to comments-northern-bitterroot-sula@fs.fed.us

Acceptable electronic formats are ASCII text, HTML, MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format (RTF).

It is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt of any form of comment. For electronically mailed comments, the sender may receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation or receipt.

Comments should include: 1) name, address, phone number, and organization represented, if any; 2) title of project on which the comments are being submitted; and 3) substantive comments including specific facts and supporting information for the District Ranger to consider. The names and addresses of people submitting comments will be included as part of the public record.

Each individual or a representative from each organization submitting substantive comments must either sign the comments or be prepared to verify their identity upon request.

If you would like more information on this project, please call Sheryl Meekin, Project Leader, at the Sula Ranger District (406) 821-3201.

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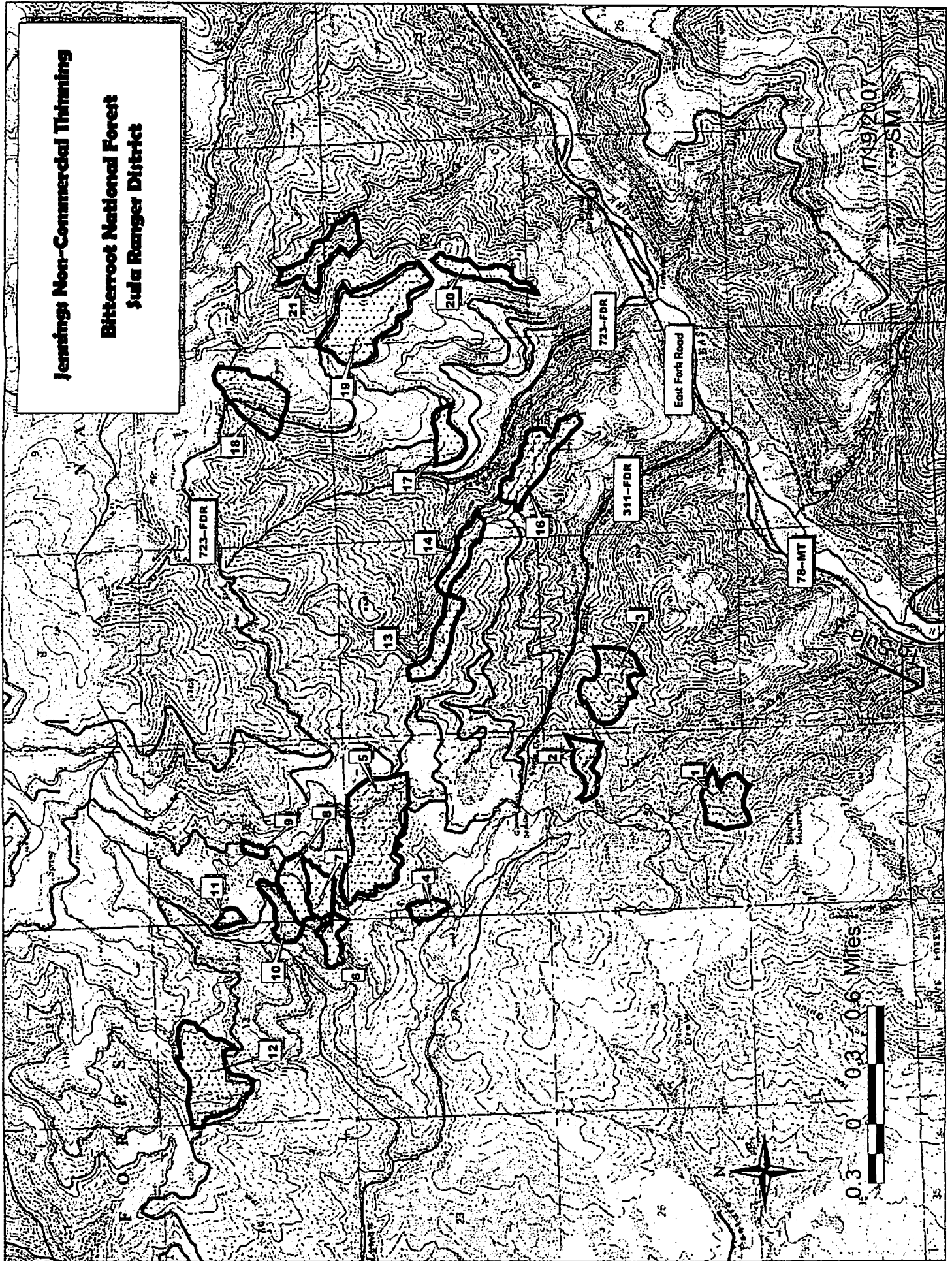
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Jennings Non-Commercial Thinning
Bitterroot National Forest
Juda Ranger District



11/9/2007
J.S.M.